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SUMMARY OF FOREST INSECT CONDITIONS IN ALASKA

1960

The forest insect situation in Alaska in 1960 can be summed up as an increase in bark beetle activity and a decrease in defoliator activity. An alarming and potentially destructive buildup in 1959 of the black-headed budworm and the hemlock sawfly in the hemlock-spruce stands of southern Southeast Alaska appears to be on a downward trend. Defoliation of hemlock this past season was light in most areas but moderate defoliation did occur within portions of Kasaan Bay. Little noticeable defoliation is expected in 1961.

A cedar bark beetle infestation is responsible for the death of thousands of Alaska-cedar and western redcedar on the southern half of Kuiu and Kupreanof Islands. These islands are located in the central part of the panhandle. The outbreak extends over several thousand acres but is primarily confined to the scrub cedar stands that occupy the poorly drained slopes and muskeg bottomlands. Heavy tree loss is expected to continue in 1961.

An Alaska spruce beetle epidemic of several years duration continues in the white spruce stands of the Kenai Peninsula. Tree mortality is extremely heavy in the northern part of the Kenai National Moose Range. On the adjacent Chugach National Forest several drainages have sustained considerable tree mortality. On the national forest some of the heaviest loss is occurring on relatively high use recreational areas. The epidemic is expected to continue at the same level next year.

Another Alaska spruce beetle epidemic was detected this year in the white spruce stands, south and east of Copper Center, along the Copper, Little Tonsina and Tiekel Rivers. The outbreak has not been fully evaluated as yet but the trend is expected to be upward next year.

An Ips bark beetle infestation has persisted for at least the past three years in white spruce along the Gerstle River, just off the Alaska Highway. Logging slash and mill slabs from sawmills in the area are primarily responsible for the situation. Tree mortality was down this year over last year and should continue downward in 1961.

(Prepared for Forest Pest Committee of Western Forestry and Conservation Association Meeting, Victoria, B. C., December 6, 1960, by G. L. Downing.)